

Revelation Chapter 1 Second Continued

Verses 17-18: John's initial reaction to this vision was fear. He was overwhelmed by the glory of God as seen in Christ (compare Dan. 8:17-18; 10:8-9; Zech. 4:1). As Jesus did many times with the apostles (compare Matt. 14:27; Mark 4:40; Luke 5:10), so now He tells John to "fear not". "The first and the last" (compare verse 11, 22:13), is equivalent to the language (of verse 8), and is a title of the almighty and eternal God. As God in the Old Testament is called the "living God", so Christ is "he that liveth". He became "dead" when He humbled Himself to die on the cross (compare Phil. 2:6-8), but then rose to live "for evermore". Three tenses of Christ's existence are emphasized:

- (1) His ever-abiding life;
- (2) His death as God-man; and
- (3) His resurrection to everlasting and authoritative life.

He has authority over death and judgment, and therefore has "the keys of hell" [Hades] and of death" (compare 20:14).

Revelation 1:17 "And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last:"

"Fell at his feet": A common response to seeing the awesome glory of the Lord (Gen. 17:3; Num. 16:22; Isa. 6:1-8; Ezek. 1:28; Acts 9:4).

John was totally overwhelmed by this vision of Jesus. The manifested glory of God was like a thousand suns and moons all in one! How do you see Christ? Do you see Him as a babe in the manger? Do you see Him only as He was when He lived upon the earth 2000 years ago? Or do you see Him as He really is today, seated in power and majesty at His Father's side? You may have heard about Jesus all your life. You may even be saved and filled with the Holy Spirit, but have you really received a revelation of Him, "a drawing away of the veil of darkness" to see Christ as He really is? How do you see Christ?

John had never seen Jesus like this. He was so overcome with the vision of Christ that he: "fell at his feet as dead." When you really catch a vision of Jesus, you too will be totally overwhelmed, when you really understand His awesome power and majesty! God's message to you today, is the same as it was to His Apostle, John: Fear Not! The same message the angel gave to Mary at the annunciation: Fear Not!

The phrase "fear not": is used over eighty times in the Bible and generally it is to quiet the fears of man in God's Presence. God is also saying to you today, as He did to John: do not fear your desperate circumstances. Do not fear the future. The One who was dead but is now alive is standing right by your side! There is nothing to fear because Jesus has conquered death and hell. He has power and authority over them. He has absolute power and authority and He wants you to see Him as he really is, high and lifted up, exalted above all things in heaven and on earth.

When you face sickness, disappointments, heartaches, financial problems, and family problems, do you see Christ standing beside you as the Great High Priest making intercession for you? Do you see the Mighty Conqueror of death and hell standing ready to give you the victory? Many believers are living in defeat because their vision of Christ is limited to their natural minds. God wants to take you beyond the limitations of your natural mind so that you may see Him as He is and really know Him in the fullness of His manifested power. The Apostle Paul prayed that the Ephesians would receive "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him" (Eph. 1:17). Paul was not talking about head knowledge, but a revelation deep within their spirits. Jesus Christ, in His glorified state of majesty and power, is depicted as standing in the midst of His Church.

Earlier we had seen Jesus standing in the midst of the churches (candlesticks). His appearance was: hair white as snow, eyes of fire, and feet of brass. A very awesome figure. The majesty of His person was overwhelming. We see here the effect that this presence had on John. If we were to come face to face with Jesus, this is the effect it would have on us, as well. When anyone encounters the presence of God, you cannot stand. Kneeling is not even enough. John fell flat on his face at His feet. He was totally humbled by this presence. This awesome appearance was almost too much for John. He appeared to be dead.

People have difficulty bowing to God in church. Believe me, if you are before Him, there is no difficulty at all. He is God; we are just people. Do not let anyone convince you that you and I are on the level of God. It is not true. We are now and always will be, subordinate to Him.

We see here that Jesus has compassion on John and reaches and touches John with His right hand. Just one touch from Jesus calms the greatest fears. He reassures John when Jesus says to him, "Fear not". Jesus is always there comforting and encouraging Christians.

Just as Jesus said (in John chapter 14:1), "Let not your heart be troubled".

"First and the last": Jesus Christ applies this Old Testament name for Yahweh (22:13; Isa. 41:4; 44:6; 48:12), to Himself, clearly claiming to be God. Idols will come and go. He was before them, and He will remain after them.

Fear is not of God. Peace is what Jesus brings. We just need to trust Him. The fear we need is of God, no one or nothing else. The fear of God could be better stated as reverence. Here we see, written in red, Jesus speaking of Himself, "I am the first and the last:".

This is similar to what God told Moses when he asked God who could he say sent him. He answered, "I AM" (Exodus 3:14). Am is present tense, no beginning no end.

The earth is the only place that there is time, as we know it. In heaven, there is no separation of time by light and dark. There is only one eternal day. God is eternity. This is difficult for us to understand only because we are trapped here with a cycle of time. Twenty four hour day, seven-day week, three hundred and sixty five day year, twelve month year. Eternity cannot be understood by flesh.

Revelation 1:18 "I [am] he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

“Keys of hell and of death” (see note on Luke 16:23). Death and Hades are essentially synonyms, but death is the condition and Hades, equivalent to the Old Testament Sheol, the place of the dead (see note on 20:13). Christ decides who lives, who dies, and when.

Jesus is explaining here. He is the same one who took on the form of flesh and died on the cross for our sins. We read (in Romans 10), what we must do to be saved.

Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

This is interesting. We must not only believe who He is and that He saved us, but we must believe that He rose from the grave. His body is what died and rose again. Jesus, when He descended into hades, took the keys of hell away from the devil. When He arose, He did away with death. Death was the last enemy to be done away with. The devil cannot put anyone in hell. Jesus is the only one who can do that. Jesus has the key. No one can enter, or exit, without Him.

We will read later how Jesus locks the devil up for 1000 years. Jesus is the Judge. The only ones Jesus will put in hell are the devil, the devil's angels, and those who reject Him.

When Jesus said "I am He that liveth", it is life forevermore. Jesus Christ, as the absolute living one, He has life in Himself, He is life, He is our source of life, and He has control of everything, in heaven, earth, and hell. He called Lazarus' life back into him.

Jesus brought many souls out of hades when He preached there. Jesus is Life. He controls our destiny. We choose (He controls), either heaven or hell eternally.

Revelation 1:19 "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter;"

Verse 19 is the key verse that unlocks the door to the entire outline of the book. It is further evidence of the threefold division of this great Revelation. John was told expressly by Christ to write, what you have seen: To write the things which were. The things he saw, all that was revealed to him through the different visions.

This verse provides a simple outline for the entire book: “the things which you have seen” refers to the vision John has just seen (chapter 1); “the things which are” denotes the letters to the churches (chapters 2-3); and “the things which will take place after these things”, refers to the revelation of future history (chapters 4-22).

What is now: To write the things which are, (referring to the condition of the churches in Asia Minor at that time), and what will take place later:

To write concerning the things which shall be hereafter: The events which would happen in the future as God fulfilled His end time plan. The literal translation reads "things which must be after these things" meaning that the things of (Revelation chapters 4-22), must be fulfilled after the "things" revealed pertaining to the churches (in Revelation chapters 2-3).

John is commissioned of Jesus to write these things down so that they will be of use to all who read it. He is also telling John not to leave anything out.

Revelation 1:20 "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches."

A mystery is a hidden message. Not for the world, but for the church. The mystery is Jesus. In this case, it is the Truth and the Word that is kept secret. Jesus is widely proclaimed, but few really have the understanding or knowing of Him.

“The angels”: The word literally means “messenger”. Although it can mean angel, and does throughout the book, it cannot refer to angels here because angels are never leaders in the church. Most likely, these messengers are the 7 key elders representing each of those churches (see note on verse 16).

Whoever, or whatever, they are, they spread the Light. Jesus is the source of this Light. He is holding and protecting these stars in His right hand. If these are ministers of God, they have no power in themselves. The Light that they give out comes from Him.

This is one of the reasons that I believe preachers should be moved upon by the Holy Spirit of God, and receive their message for the church through the Spirit from God. I do not believe that ministers should buy, or be sent, messages from other people to be used to give to the church. Jesus' Spirit is in each church, if we are His. He knows the problem of each specific church on a given day, and He alone knows what message needs to be brought.

These seven candlesticks, we are told here, are the seven churches symbolic of all churches for then and now. A candlestick is not a light. It is the holder for the Light. These candlesticks lift the Light up for all to see. That is the exact purpose of the church, to elevate the Light, Jesus. These candlesticks have to be cared for and fueled to be able to burn.

The minister and the church are difficult to separate. We know this is speaking of the church and the ministry of the church. I believe that the stars are ministers held in Jesus' hand.

I believe these letters were written to these particular churches describing conditions that were going on then. But perhaps a more important message for us to see, is the message in each of them dealing with the problems in our churches right now.

Revelation Chapter 1 Second Continued Questions

1. What did John do when he saw Him?
2. What did it appear had happened to John?
3. What did Jesus do to reassure him?
4. John was totally _____ by His presence.
5. What overpowering message did the author receive from God?
6. What message must we not let anyone convince us of?
7. What did Jesus tell us not to do in John 14:1?
8. Fear of God is actually what?
9. What time is it in heaven now?
10. Jesus says "I am he that liveth and was _____".
11. Besides believing in Jesus, what must we do to be saved that we read in Romans?
12. What two things did Jesus do in hell?
13. How long will Jesus lock up the devil?
14. Who will Jesus put in hell?
15. Jesus called the life back into _____?
16. What happened when Jesus preached in hell?
17. Why did God want John to write this down?
18. Who is the mystery?
19. Who are the stars?
20. What are the seven candlesticks?
21. What do the stars do?
22. Why does the author believe we should not buy messages?
23. What is a candlestick?

24. Write about the fears in your life that you have overcome through faith.